Fur Wealth in Canada Since the Pioneer Days

Trappers Struggle for Valuable Skins in Northern Wilds to Fill Demand; Many Varieties of Animals

Hudson's Bay Traders in Early Days of Canada Bartered Goods and Supplies for Wealth of Furs—Indians Live Near Haunts of Fur-Bearing Animals and Are Most Successful Hunters—Great World Market for Furs Supplied from Canada.

By COLIN THOMSON

FURS, as articles of clothing, for aught I know, are as ancient as fig leaves. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the lady, who first wore furs admired herself so clad, and discarded leaf clothing without regret, however handsome a person in early times might appear, with a fox skin flung over the shoulder, and a badger skin hung in front much after the way a hielan'mon wears his sporran today.

In those days furs were worn undressed. They could not be compared to the charm the furs of today lend to the handsome well groomed lady of the present time, rolled up in a furrier dressed garment of our age.

Furs have always been a very popular article of commerce. The supply is becoming yearly less than the demand. In a few years the luxury of furs will be confined to the rich.

It is not right to think fur is manufactured like silk or woolen goods, although the imitation article has met the genuine article half way, and may be bought under the name of fur. So well is this done that without close inspection, one can hardly tell the difference.

The real article of fur is not manufactured, it grows on the back of such wild and tame animals as roam over our forests and hills, and have to be hunted by skilful trappers under great difficulties. These animals are known as fur-bearing animals.

Hair seems to be the natural covering of animals, but all animals are not fur bearing, although many such are sold as fur, a dogskin coat, or a sheepskin jacket, for example. Most people know this, but there are some in doubt as to where to draw the line that distinguishes the difference. The great majority also, who wear furs, have no knowledge of the kind they may be carrying, but if they do they know it only by the name, by which it was designated when they made the purchase.

Public Knows Little of It

The buying public know comparatively little of the animal which may have been the original producer of the skin, which produced the garment they so proudly display. Nor are they aware of the conditions under which these furs have passed before they were offered in the finished article for sale.

On the ramble over this subject I would like to look at the furs in their natural state on the bodies of the animals, and from which the expensive bit of material called fur derives its name. The difficulties and hardships experienced by those who are the first possessors of the raw furs. We call stretched and dried skins raw furs.

Preparing for Market

The trading, packing and transportation, principally to England and the United States, and the grading of these furs as well as sorting are features in the general process of bringing these supplies before the manufacturer in order to produce the finished articles offered to the people by the retailer.

Once the fur reaches the hands of the manufacturer and undergoes the dressing treatment, the transformation is sometimes so great that an untrained eye could hardly trace that beautiful covering back to the hide that coated the animal before it fell prey to the wily trapper. The very word "fur" has a sound of wealth to it, almost equal to the word "gold."

The Furs

[illegible] alpha- was "a skin for a skin," which meant the value of a skin in goods from their trading posts. In trading this value was known as a "Made Beaver" and was the only medium of value then known to the Indians, who knew nothing of dollars and cents in the north until the treaties were made with them by the government.

Small mammals, as squirrels, wonusks, rabbits, Arctic hares and badgers, are caught and used for the manufacture of much of the imitation furs found on the market today. Some of these examples are Paris mink, Arabian seal, Chicago buffalo, New York lynx, etc.

Supplies Big Demand

In the year 1920 841,000 musquash (muskrat) skins were offered for sale on the London fur market. It supplies a great part of the fur product of the present day and is sold when made up, under much more popular names than its own, so much so that it would puzzle the best expert on genuine furs in Canada.

In 1890, when stationed at the Pas, the Hudson's Bay Company's leading trading station, as chief trader, I bought in as many as 60,000 musquash skins for that winter's trade, besides large numbers of many other kinds of fur.

In Russia the marten kind is the sable fur, and of all furs I think it represents the most delicate and standard grade of real fur. It always has a rich appearance as well as affording the desired degree of warmth and comfort. There are two kinds, the pale and the dark. We are not aware of this fur being dyed or imitated. It stands on its own merits, a real handsome fur.

Mink Is Popular

The mink is about the same size and shape as the marten and is very popular. There are some purposes to which it adapts itself more than others. If it were not for its rough hide it might be classed as a second to the marten. The color is a dark

Veteran Fur Trader

Back in 1876, Colin Thomson, then an energetic and ambitious young Scotsman, came to Canada in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and he served in the pioneer days at western posts. He was stationed at The Pas, Manitoba, and had charge of the post for many years. Until 1893 he was in the service of the company, and during his lengthy period, Mr. Thomson had many interesting experiences with the trappers and Indians of the early times.

Today, Mr. Thomson is a farm owner west of Bowden, Alberta. He is one of the few of the old guard of Hudson Bay pioneers in the west, and in his leisure time he looks back over a span of 50 years and handles in this article an interesting and educational topic that makes a striking appeal.

mumbled "Ke Ka Me Tain Ootin Ka Keo Ka Am," which means "I give it to you. Take the whole thing. Never mind."

After an examination of this beauty and some talk on its quality and how it was trapped I gave the bag another shake, and out came a splendid silver fox skin worth at least $300. I was pleasantly surprised and not to say a little excited, over the discovery of two such splendid skins from a single trapper, and the bag was still bulging. I did not like to appear over anxious about getting the furs, so I took things easy and the trapper smoked on in his contented manner.

And Still More

I again shook the bag and, reaching in, pulled forth a third fox skin, another silver, valued at at least $350, and maybe when sold on the London market worth from $450 to $600. The next one I reached out of the sack was a red fox, and this was followed by a fisher skin and some minks and marten furs, without a doubt the best utia-wut (fur-bag) I ever handled from a single trapper. There was from $1,250 to $1,500 worth of furs in that old weather-beaten gunny sack, and not a crust of bread in the destitute home to feed the moneyed trapper upon his return from the tiresome trip.

Three silver fox skins from one hunter in a day was a record in the fur-trading business. There was no scarcity of food in that log hut for some time to come after that day.

Cross Fox Furs

I have dwelt for some time on the silver and black fox. Now I shall refer briefly to the cross fox, which is the dividing line between the silver and the red. This is a pretty fur, of many grades and values. The red fox is a familiar fur and is sometimes worn in its natural shape and color, a yellowish red. Being so plentiful the value of the red is low. I have bought thousands of skins of red fox at $2.50 a skin, and as many as 800 skins in a season at the Pas station on Saskatchewan river.

The blue and white are principally Arctic foxes, and are plentiful enough in their own country. This fox does not migrate so far south, but stays around the north barren lands. Their value in those early days was $1 a skin.

The lynx, or wild cat fur is much used for coat trimming in its natural colors, but much of it is dyed and used to give effect to expensive garments. Ladies' muffs seem to require much of this fur because of its comfortable, warm appearance.

Heavy Skinned

Bear, beaver, wolverine, otter and fisher are heavy skinned animals, and consequently are more adapted for robes and floor rugs. Otter and fisher skins, however, sometimes produce very excellent quality for caps [illegible]

order that they may remain at their posts and carry on their trapping operations without hindrance. What furs they may have accumulated are bought up by these men and carried through to the trading stations. The trader, who is known to the Indian as the "Ookimaw," grades the lot, prices them, and passes a credit on his books in favor of the trapper, until he returns from his hunt.

Driver's Routine

Dogs are useful animals in the northern extremity of Canada, where conditions are entirely primitive. They are used for all transportation work. Even the traveler, on business or pleasure, is forced to resort to the dog train in order to move from one centre to another in that part of the country. By this means he travels over frozen lakes and rivers, through forests and along river banks, everywhere and anywhere in the direction of his objective.

The dog driver in the far north has numerous duties in his routine. The mail is drawn by dogs across the barren wastes in winter to the uttermost inhabited parts of the country. The master supervises his outlying trading stations regularly throughout the season, bringing home the articles of trade and commerce. He is the moving spirit of the entire inland winter business.

Help in Plowing

The remarkable service of these northern huskies is exemplified by the experience I had while at the Pas. I had a two-acre potato field plowed up by dogs. Twenty of these huskies were harnessed to a plow and two or three men did the driving and guiding of the plow. There was no alternative as horses were not available, and the dogs were the great servants of man in the fur trading business. They could not be dispensed with in any part of the operations.

The summer transport is done by canoes and York boats, which carry as much as four tons of freight at a time. River steamers plying on the Saskatchewan were also employed in the later years, but at times were not dependable, due to their uncertainty in shallow water to reach their destination. The canoe and boat could always go.

System of Barter

A life in the fur trade, over 45 years ago, such as I have had the youthful pleasure of experiencing, was one of the delightful ventures of my time. It was not a shop-keeping system of business. It was a system of barter—"Skin for skin." Often we traded for thousands of dollars worth of furs while sprawled out on the floor of some log hut or birch bark tent in the forest, as well as at the well stocked store house of the trading post. This was just the original step in the gathering of the great wealth of furs to adorn the money class of the great metropolitan centres.

Thrilling Life of Trappers

Much more might be added to this account in relating the many interesting incidents in the career of fur traders in the early eighties. Exciting stories of fur hunting are recounted. Dangerous journeys, thrilling escapes from the savage claws of vicious animals, fighting for their lives; shooting dangerous rapids with wealthy supplies of furs, escaping only through the skilful hands of seasoned Indian paddlers, and numerous other instances all entered into the lives of the man who sought the coverings for warmth and comfort to those in quiet peaceful surroundings of cities thousands of miles away.

This fur trader was one type of the pioneer of Canada. He lives on today, hunting for the rapidly diminishing game, that dwindles as civilization gradually stretches out its tentacles into the broad expanse where the animal slinks away farther and farther to the barren wastes, eager to escape from the avarice of man.

In the Days of Early Fur Trading

Posts Where Pioneers Bartered with Indians

LAURENCE CLARKE
Chief Factor of Hudson's Bay Company, in charge of Carlton district in the early days of fur trading.

COLIN THOMSON

1. Warehouse and store at the lower end of Grand Rapids, where tramway and steamboat service was routed in the early days of fur trading. It was at this place that Ralph Connor, famous writer, was located when he wrote "The Man From Glengarry." Mr. Thomson, who has prepared the accompanying story, was stationed here for a time. He is shown, sitting on the packing case beside the building.

2. Indian trappers in their canoe going up the Moonian river on their way to Stanley. This picture was taken over 40 years ago.

3. Laurence Clarke, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, in charge of the fur trading post in Carlton district.

4. The Pas trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company shown in the distance. This was taken when The Pas was nothing more than a Bay trading post, where the Indians bartered their furs for supplies. Mr. Thomson was in charge of this post for many years.

5. Colin Thomson, pioneer Hudson's Bay fur trader. This picture was taken more than 35 years ago, when he was in the service of the company as a trader.

tion is sometimes so great that an untrained eye could hardly trace that beautiful covering back to the hide that coated the animal before it fell prey to the wily trapper. The very word "fur" has a sound of wealth to it, almost equal to the word "gold."

The Furs

Fur bearing animals classed alphabetically are known in Canada under these names:

Bears—Black, brown, grizzly and white.

Beavers—Black, brown and light, all of large and small varieties.

Ermines—

Fishers—

Foxes—Red, Cross, Silver and the black; also blue, white and kitt, and these also have their grades.

Lynx—And a similar species called "wild cat."

Marten—Or Sable, dark and light.

Mink—Dark, light and white (very rare).

Musquash, or Water Rats—Classed as spring (the larger), winter (the medium), fall (the small). Also a higher grade gnown as dark or black.

Otter—Light and dark.

Skunk—

Wolf—Timber (largest and most ferocious), prairie, and coyote.

Wolverines—(The most hated of all fur bearing animals by the trappers, sometimes called "the Devil" by the Indians.)

These are the principal fur bearing animals of Canada. To these may be added the Alaska seal, which is now confined to the Pacific coast. The possum and wallaby belong more to the United States and Australia. The male of these species is also used in the manufacture of hats. In one year 1,247,393 were sold on the London market. The badger skin has also some commercial value.

Used for Robes

The musk ox of the barren north lands is much admired when made into a robe or overcoat. The buffalo is in the same class.

The Rocky mountain goat and the mountain sheep skins seldom find their way to the London market. They are used, however, by the Eskimo hunters themselves.

The ermine skin of the Canadian fur list of importance is about the smallest and most insignificant, and the lowest priced of any of the fur bearing animals. When winter approaches this pretty little animal, whose fur coat is a yellowish brown, changes its color to an almost pure white all over, excepting the tail tip, in the winter. It is much admired as a fur garment decoration.

In heraldry ermine, whether real or imitation, is the official standing of high rank, and is conspicuously worn on the robes of kings, queens, princes, dukes, barons and courtiers in general.

Quite a Demand

While the Indian trapper of the far north disdains to hunt the ermine himself, leaving it for the small son to practice on, it is a fur that is much in demand, and a goodly supply is handled on almost every market. There was a time when a skin was worth but five cents, and the lords of the court, who wore it on their robes of office, might not in early times be aware of its insignificant value.

The Hudson's Bay Company, the original fur trading company in America, always used the word skins for raw undressed furs. Their motto

merits, a rear handsome fur.

Mink Is Popular

The mink is about the same size and shape as the marten and is very popular. There are some purposes to which it adapts itself more than others. If it were not for its rough hide it might be classed as a second to the marten. The color is a dark brown, occasionally, but rarely, a very, very dark, called black, mink, is found. I have bought some beauties in my time.

Still more rare is the white mink, which I have also traded from the Indians. They, however, are considered a freak, and of poor commercial value.

The most valued of all furs is the silver and black fox. For business purposes pairs are sought and when found identically the same, demand a price far exceeding anything the general public can afford to pay. As high as $1,500 has been paid for a pair of genuine black fox skins.

Particular Grading

The grading of these black and silver fox skins is a most particular matter. Purchasing from the Indian trappers in the raw state these furs are very carefully considered. Sometimes a black or silver fox has a trace of his red-haired progenitors behind his ears. If a few tiny red hairs are visible the value is much reduced, as it brands the skin a non-silver and places it in the class "good No. 1 cross."

I have known of a trapper who tried to pass a fox of this class as a silver by darkening those few red hairs with charcoal from a burned stick, and taking it into the trader's store after dark. However, very few are encountered, having so trifling a blemish. The black fox is the rarest of all furs.

Buys Valuable Catch

I remember, when engaged in the fur trade, one day a report reached me that an Indian trapper had just arrived in the village and that he had trapped a silver fox. To me this was a most important piece of information, as this fox skin must be secured for the company. I lost no time in ordering out my dog team and packing my sleigh with a goodly supply of eatables for the trappers, I set out to deal for the valuable hide.

Upon arrival at the trapper's hut I found him there with his mother and father. The shelves were destitute of food. The two old folks sat by the fireside, eating with their fingers out of a dish of boiled barley. I brought in the parcel of food I had on the carriol. I opened the food and placed it in the hands of the old people, a gift they much appreciated.

Looking around the room I saw nothing to suggest the presence of a $500 silver fox skin, which I came after, save an old burlap sack overhead on the beams. After treating the trapper to some tobacco I began business by asking after the success he had had in the hunting trip, saying that I had heard something of his good luck, and understood he had a valuable fox skin.

Money in Furs

The trapper reached up for the sack suspended from the beam, which contained the fur hunt. This meant permission and possession for me, when it was handed over. I shook out a beautiful black fox skin, a $500 article on the London market. The owner, smoking contentedly,

quire much of this fur because of its comfortable, warm appearance.

Heavy Skinned

Bear, beaver, wolverine, otter and fisher are heavy skinned animals, and consequently are more adapted for robes and floor rugs. Otter and fisher skins, however, sometimes produce very excellent quality for caps and overcoat collars.

I think it is important to know that we are not using the identical fur as it developed on the animal. In the condition it is purchased from the trapper it would not be of much service, although in primitive times there was no such process as we have today to cure the skins and produce the quality that is sought by the public.

Skins were worn in the olden days not for their attractiveness but as a protection against the severe cold. Nowadays it is common to see a young lady clad in furs in the extreme heat of summer. Fur has certainly captivated the hearts of the ladies, but we all have a fancy for the fur of any animal after it has left the hands of the furrier and garment maker. Very few were aware however, that there is sometimes a difference of 300 per cent between the value of the raw fur and the same fur made up.

Indian, Leading Trapper

The conditions under which furs are obtained and the manner of inland transportation may be of interest to many.

Who is the trapper who supplies the great markets of the world?

The white man trapper may add a small portion to the world's supply. The real fur trapper is the Indian, who lives a life of isolation in the broad expanses of unsettled Canada far to the north. Of course there are others, but nearly all the furs taken in Canada are the result of Indian labor and skill. He lives where the animals live. He makes a study of their habits from childhood. Necessity arouses him to hunt, as he needs winter clothing and other necessities.

Furs, a few years ago, before the white man entered his country, were the Indian's only source of revenue. White men have no doubt of late years tried their hand at trapping, but no one knows the haunts and habits of the fur bearing animal so well as the Indian.

Stretched and Dried

After the animal is caught the skin is removed, then stretched and dried on a board or form. This is the first step, and the only treatment it gets, until it is sold to the trader, who, at the end of the season, packs them into bales, hide side out, and ships them to the warehouses of the fur dealers in London, New York and the other leading fur manufacturing centres.

Winter, of course, is the time of the great harvest of furs. Inland transportation calls for much labor and expense. The frozen lakes furnish the highway for transportation in winter and the open rivers in summer. Dog trains were used in winter, and in fact they form the chief method of hauling out the fur cargo now.

Dog Drivers' Task

Dog drivers, with their teams, visit the Indian trappers' winter quarters at great distances from the regular summer dwelling. These drivers also carry supplies to these trappers in

a system of barter—"Skin for skin." Often we traded for thousands of dollars worth of furs while sprawled out on the floor of some log hut or birch bark tent in the forest, as well as at the well stocked store house of the trading post. This was just the original step in the gathering of

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Post Churchill June 1933.

Naturalist on Visit to North, Studying Birds

Lists 30 Different Birds in The Pas Area

F. L. Farley, of Camrose, Alberta, veteran naturalist and orinthologist arrived in The Pas today after a visit to Churchill, where he visited his friend Arthur Towmey, orinthologist of Edmonton.

Bird life in this part of Northern Canada is particularly interesting to experts, and Mr. Farley is one orinthologist who would like to see bird lore more generally known to the rank and file of citizens.

As an example of a few of the specimins in and around The Pas he listed today the birds observed during two walks on June 8th and today. The list follows:

Song Sparrow, Clay-Colored Sparrow, Sovannah Sparrow, Block Teru, Red-eyed Wireo, Chipping Sparrow, Killdeer, Tree Swallow, Ring-billed Gull, Robin, Crow, Warbling Vireo, House Wren, Night Hawk, Wilson Snipe, Yellow Warbler, Spotted Sandpiper, Lesser Yelloylegs, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Lincoln Sparrow, Alder Flycatcher, Jnnco, WhiteThroated Sparrow Hairy , Woodpecker, Red-winged Blackbird, Marbled Godwit, Kingbird, Bronged Grockle, Tennessee Warbler.

Mr. Farley is leaving tonight for Camrose.

30 birds

25.00

2533
2533
2533

LIVE STOCK SALES & PRICES
Week Ended June 15, 1933.

GRADING	NO. SOLD	AVRGE PRICE $	BULK OF SALES $	TOP $	TOP LAST WEEK $
CATTLE					
Steers Good & Choice	284	4.27	4.00 - 4.75	5.00	5.00
(Up to 1050 lb) Medium	214	3.50	3.25 - 3.75	3.75	4.00
" Common	54	2.75	2.50 - 3.00	3.00	3.00
Steers Good & Choice	149	4.25	4.00 - 4.50	4.50	4.75
(Over 1050 lb) Medium	106	3.50	3.25 - 3.75	3.75	3.75
" Common	7	2.79	2.50 - 3.00	3.00	3.00
HEIFERS Good & Choice	128	3.75	3.50 - 4.00	4.25	4.25
" Medium	93	3.15	3.00 - 3.25	3.25	3.25
" Common	32	2.50	2.25 - 2.75	2.75	2.75
FED CALVES Gd & Choice	61	4.35	4.00 - 4.75	5.00	5.50
" Medium	102	3.01	3.25 - 3.75	3.75	3.75
COWS Good	65	2.85	2.75 - 3.00	3.00	3.25
" Medium	154	2.25	2.00 - 2.50	2.50	2.50
" Common	72	1.65	1.50 - 1.75	1.75	1.75
CANNERS AND CUTTERS	22	1.25	1.00 - 1.50	1.50	1.50
BULLS Good	30	1.85	1.75 - 2.00	2.00	2.00
" Common	51	1.35	1.25 - 1.50	1.50	1.50
STOCKER & FEEDER Good	122	2.75	2.50 - 3.00	3.00	3.25
STEERS Common	181	2.00	1.75 - 2.25	2.25	2.50
STOCK COWS & Good	22	2.50	2.00 - 3.00	3 00	3.00
HEIFERS Common	67	1.50	1.25 - 1.75	1.75	1.75
MILKERS AND SPRINGERS	41	#	20.00 - 40.00	40.00	45.00
CALVES					
Good & Choice Veal	380	4.30	4.00 - 4.50	5.00	5.00
Common & Medium Veal	966	3.00	2.50 - 3.50	3.50	4.00
Grass	--	--	-- - --	--	--
HOGS Selects	381	Bacon price plus $1. per hcg premium			
(F.& W.) Bacons	1459	4.98	4.85 - 5.00	5.00	4.90
Butchers	757	4.48	4.35 - 4.50	4.50	4.40
Heavies	242	4.49	4.35 - 4.50	4.50	4.40
Extra Heavies	181	3.24	3.00 - 3.25	3.25	3.50
Lights & Feeders	903	4.93	4.85 - 5.00	5.00	4.75
Sows No.1	116	3.13	3.00 - 3.25	3.25	3.50
Sows No.2	79	2.50	2.50 - --	2.50	2.75
Roughs	5	2.00	2.00 - --	2.00	2.50
Stags	16	1.50	1.25 - 1.75	1.75	1.75
LAMBS					
Good Handyweights	349	7.12	6.50 - 7.50	8.00	10.00
Good Heavies	--	--	-- - --	--	--
Common all Weights	290	4.50	4.00 - 5.00	5.00	7.00
Bucks	--	--	-- - --	--	--
SHEEP Good Heavy	--	--	-- - --	--	--
Good Handyweights	170	2.75	2.50 - 3.00	3.00	3.00
Common	96	1.25	1.00 - 1.50	1.50	1.50

D. McG.
16-6-33.

Per head.

"The Glenlitten Murder," by E. Phillips Oppenheim. See page 8.

THE CALGARY

FORTYSIXTH YEAR, No. 5544.

ALLIED PRINTING TRADES UNION LABEL COUNCIL CALGARY

CALGARY, ALBER

Calgary's own BIRD SANCTU

WHERE, WITHIN THE C
THE WILD WATERFO
UNDISTURBED A
WARBLERS TRI
SONGS UNMO

A view of the two islands, which are reserved as wild bird sanctuari wooded and yet within the city limits. On one side the islands are boun land by spring fed streams which never freeze. Song bird and the wi

Unique Bird Refuge on Col. Walker Island

Will Be Only Wild Bird Sanc tuary of Kind to Lie Within Limits of Any City in C anada — Comprises Approximately Fifty-eight Acres Including Two Well Wooded Islands, Part of Col. Wa lker Estate in East Calgary— Late Mrs. Walker Alwa ys Wished Land To Be Used As Bird Refuge and W. J. Selby Walker Will Obey His Mother's Wish in This R espect

for once they know they are to be cared for and protected from hunger as well as harm from humans they will seldom go far away and will al-

proval by order-in-council will auto matically follow.

Writing to Mr. Walker after hi visit, Mr. Munro stated:

DAILY HERALD

BERTA, SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 1929 SUPPLEMENT SECTION, PAGES 1 TO 8

Alpine Club to go to Rogers Pass, by Arthur O. Wheeler. See page 2.

tuaries. The photo shows the admirable possibility of this site, which is well bounded by the Bow river and on the other they are separated from the main- e wild waterfowl will all find sanctuary here.

"ALBERTA'S JACK MINER." GEORGE PICKERING

auto- r his Now that the land will become his under the late Mrs. Walker's will, he will put in force her great wish, that it should be used as a reserve for

for more than three years. He has been the wild creature's friend all his life, and even now the ducks which have made a home on the two

Canadian Rockies, and that was George Pickering's first introduction to the mountains, in which he spent all his youth and early manhood, learning the ways of all the wild creatures which lived in the rocky fastnesses.

His whole life has been protection, and never has Mr. Pickering been a hunter nor a trapper. He has been the friend of animals and has found that ani-

was here that he first came into touch with Mr. Selby Walker. In 1917 Mr. Pickering came to Calgary and for the last three years has been engaged in planning and preparing the wild bird sanctuary.

George Pickering learnt a great deal of his knowledge of the habits and customs of the wild creatures from the Stoney Indians, with whom

Limits of Any City in Canada — Comprises Approximately Fifty-eight Acres Including Two Well Wooded Islands, Part of Col. Walker Estate in East Calgary—Late Mrs. Walker Always Wished Land To Be Used As Bird Refuge and W. J. Selby Walker Will Obey His Mother's Wish in This Respect

Waterfowl and Songsters Have Home On Very Doorstep of Busy City Life

As in Old Days Before Calgary Grew and Dispossessed Feathered Flocks From Age-Old Haunts, Now Birds Will Return and Live to Gladden the City With Bright Plumage and Gay Song, But Now With This Wiser Generation's Protection—Work Has Been Going on Quietly at Sanctuary for Three Years Under Care of W. J. Selby Walker and George Pickering.

By GERALD BRAWN

A wild bird sanctuary within the very city limits of Calgary!

Little songsters and the famous Canadian geese and ducks—as well as the many other feathered creatures native to Alberta's prairies—are once more to make their home in Calgary, and, unless they are driven away with shot and stone, lucky city dwellers will wake to the sound of cheerful choruses in the tree-tops in the first gorgeous rays of prairie sunrise.

Just a few, short years ago Calgary and the country round about used to be alive with gay little warblers, but just as the buffalo was forced to give way to man's presence—which as the usual rule meant death and extermination in those days—so had the birds deserted the countryside.

But now the picture has changed, and man is seeking the presence of the winged creatures in their midst. Calgary is to be the first city in the west to give within its own city limits the birds and waterfowl a natural home where they can live unrestrained, thanks to the generosity of the late Mrs. Walker, pioneer of Alberta, who, as the wife of Col. James Walker, grand old veteran red coat, rancher and citizen of Alberta, lived in the times when Calgary was a birds' paradise. Now by her kindness and that of her son, W. J. Selby Walker, she is helping to remake it a little part of Eden for her feathered friends.

This is to be Calgary's own wild bird sanctuary. And that is at once a unique possession and a great responsibility. No matter how hard a few very interested conservationists may try to preserve quiet and protection for the birds, they will not succeed unless the general public, too, learns to act as the feathered flock's friend and puts down all wanton killing and trespassing—and makes this place a real sanctuary. It will be under the care of the various sportsmen's associations and eventually under the dominion laws, but it really depends for success on the protection of the ordinary man in the street.

The sanctuary is situated just a little way from the end of the East Calgary street car line, and Ninth avenue southeast stretches within a short distance of it, so that it is comparatively little distance from the clamorous centre of the city—a bird's oasis within a desert of homes and workshops.

IDEALLY SITUATED; SPRING WATER NEVER FREEZES

Ideally situated just within the city limits to the east, well-wooded and, best of all, with running spring water all the year round, no matter how severe the winter may be, the sanctuary has facilities which it would be hard to find anywhere else. Here it will be possible for birds to live and nest without danger, and protected throughout the year ducks, pheasants, partridge, geese and songsters will stay in the neighborhood of Calgary twelve months of the year instead of making their flight south in winter time.

The sanctuary land comprises 58 acres, more than half of which consists of two islands, one of 28 acres and the other a little land mass sticking off the end of the bigger island. The sanctuary will be protected on the south bank by land owned by the Col. Walker estate which will also be given over to the birds, and on the north bank the land is owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. and shooting will be strictly prohibited. So that on all sides the sanctuary is protected.

Col. Walker's home will stand like a sentinel over-looking the sanctuary.

DREAM OF TWO MEN

Two men have been planning this wild bird sanctuary for several years, one being W. J. Selby Walker son of Col. James Walker, and well-known business man of the city, and the other George Pickering, old-time game warden and pioneer of Alberta, who has been working quietly for the past three years in planning the sanctuary and more difficult still, in inducing the waterfowl to stay there on their way south or north.

This past winter has shown the fruits of these careful labors, for a huge flock of ducks, mostly the famous Mallard, have stayed around the island throughout the long winter. They have deserted the warmer south, to which they usually migrate when the first cold snap crystallizes this north country, and have stayed in Calgary all the year round. These are the first of the wild birds who will make this sanctuary their home, for once they know they are to be cared for and protected from hunger as well as harm from humans they will seldom go far away and will always return. And other waterfowl, passing over the sanctuary on their way south in autumn, will also be attracted by the happy lot of these birds and will fly down to investigate—and to stay. And so, slowly but steadily, will a great sanctuary for waterfowl be built up in the city limits.

HAS BEEN APPROVED BY CHIEF FEDERAL WARDEN

The sanctuary now only awaits approval by order-in-council to take on the status of a dominion sanctuary—which means that all the machinery of the national parks department will be available for its protection. The site has been recommended by J. A. Munro, chief federal migratory bird warden of the western provinces, who during a recent visit to Calgary, made a thorough tour of the islands and was delighted with the possibilities, remarking that it was one of the best sites he had ever seen.

It has been recommended by this authority to the national parks department as a sanctuary, and approval by order-in-council will automatically follow.

Writing to Mr. Walker after his visit, Mr. Munro stated:

"In connection with my inspection of the lands described as 'the unsubdivided portion of the S.E. ¼ of section 12, Tp. 24, R. 1, W. 5,' I beg to advise you that, in my opinion, this area is suitable for bird sanctuary purposes. It is also my considered opinion that a reserve of this kind so close to the city of Calgary would be of much educational value to the public."

GREAT PLANS FOR FUTURE

And now for a few words about one of the prime movers in this scheme. Mr. Selby Walker has always been interested in birds and wild life. In fact, when he was a youth his great ambition was to be a naturalist. From his earliest days he has studied the ways and manners of the feathered creatures, and no doubt he owes a part of his love for the songsters to his early life, when in the old ranch-home and later in his present home he was surrounded by birds.

A view of the two islands, which are reserved as wild bird sanctuaries. wooded and yet within the city limits. On one side the islands are bounded land by spring fed streams which never freeze. Song bird and the wild w

WHERE WIL

The top centre photo shows a view of the bigger island which is to be reserved as a natural home for wild birds. It is part of the Col. Walker estate owned by the late Mrs. Walker, wife of Col. James Walker, Alberta old-timer, whose wish that it should be dedicated to the feathered creatures is being followed by her son, W. J. Selby Walker, well known Calgary business man.

aries. The photo shows the admirable possibility of this site, which is well unded by the Bow river and on the other they are separated from the main- wild waterfowl will all find sanctuary here.

Now that the land will become his under the late Mrs. Walker's will, he will put in force her great wish, that it should be used as a reserve for birds.

And so once more the little warblers and wildfowl will return to this ancient haunt of theirs. Mr. Walker will once again hear the cheerful chirping and the liquid notes of birdsongs.

He has for years taken a foremost part in this kind of work and is the executive secretary of the Canadian National parks association. The society was organized to support the preservation of the Dominion's national parks. J. W. Davidson, well-known Calgarian, is a member of the excutive council.

ALBERTA'S JACK MINER

Alberta's Jack Miner is the man who is the second genius of this wild bird sanctuary for Calgary. George Pickering, pioneer, game warden, packer, and a man who has spent most of his years watching and protecting wild animals in one of the finest game preserves in Canada, has been working towards this ideal for more than three years. He has been the wild creature's friend all his life, and even now the ducks which have made a home on the two islands know him and trust him.

Mr. Pickering has had a varied career in the mountains, of which he knows practically every worthwhile beauty spot in the southern area of the Rocky Mountain parks district. He has trod every trail in that part of the parks, and knows more about game life there than most men in the province.

LIVED MOST OF LIFE IN MOUNTAINS

At the early age of eight George made his first acquaintance with mountain trails, when he journeyed to Spray Lakes with his uncle, Alec Pickering, well-known pioneer miner of Canmore. George has lived most of his life in the mountains, however, for he was only three years old when his father brought him to Anthracite. Jack Pickering, his father, was originally of England and came of old mining stock, and when he got to the coal fields of Pennsylvania he took to the craft of his forefathers. In the eighties he, with a group of other miners, came to open up the recently discovered coalfields in the Canadian Rockies, and that was George Pickering's first introduction to the mountains, in which he spent all his youth and early manhood, learning the ways of all the wild creatures which lived in the rocky fastnesses.

His whole life has been protection, and never has Mr. Pickering been a hunter nor a trapper. He has been the friend of animals and has found that animals have returned his friendship. "Never once have I been attacked by any wild creature, though I have spent practically all my life with them," is a boast of which Mr. Pickering can justly be proud. His philosophy born of his life's work is that it is the human being that is wild and not the animals. Jack Miner's philosophy too.

WAS TRAINED BY STONEY INDIANS

Though he spent his early youth in the mines, it was always the wind-swept ranges of the mountains that George was hankering for, and at the first opportunity he quit his work under the earth and came above ground to be where he could watch the great variety of wild life which existed in the parks.

Mr. Pickering took A. O. Wheeler, who was then president of the Alpine Club of Canada, through the Palliser Pass when the latter was engaged in naming the different peaks. Later Mr. Pickering took charge of the walking tour camps at the Palliser and Trail centre, and it was here that he first came into touch with Mr. Selby Walker. In 1917 Mr. Pickering came to Calgary and for the last three years has been engaged in planning and preparing the wild bird sanctuary.

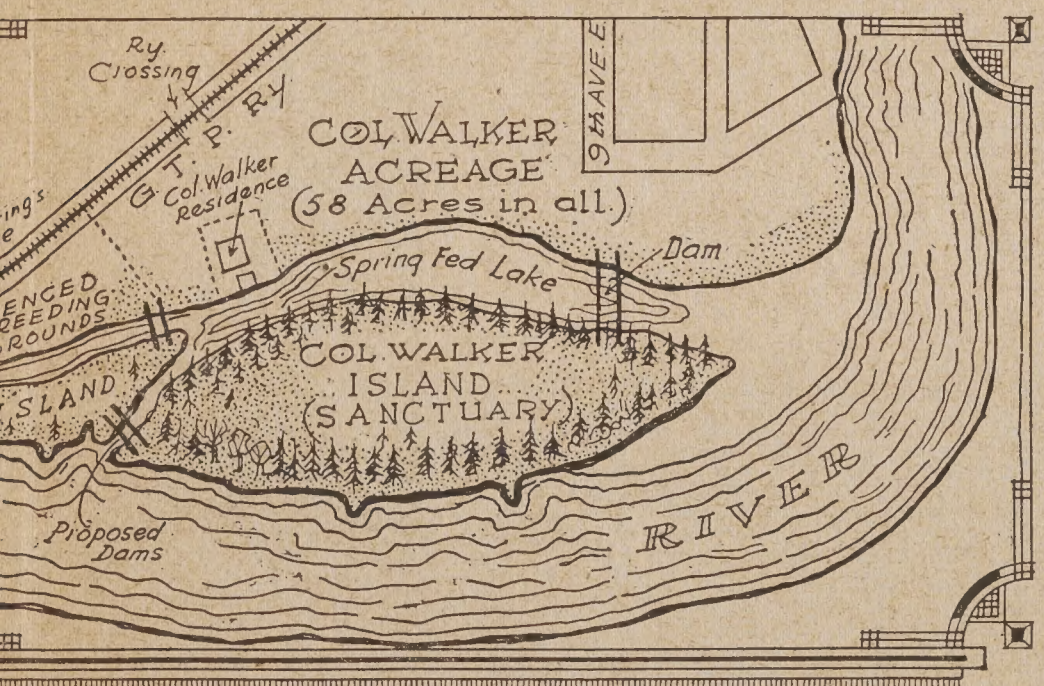
George Pickering learnt a great deal of his knowledge of the habits and customs of the wild creatures from the Stoney Indians, with whom he used to roam the woods in his early youth. He became a great favorite of the Indians and whenever they went on a trip George would accompany them if he could. In this way not only did he learn some of the secrets of these wonderful woodcraftsmen, for whom he has the greatest admiration, but he has the the opportunity of observing things at first hand.

The Calgary wild bird sanctuary will be in the care of such men as W. J. Selby Walker and George Pickering, who also have the support and active co-operation of the Calgary fish and game association, who have been responsible for the feeding of the ducks at the reserve this winter.

But it will be the general public who will either make or mar this bird sanctuary. By their support, and especially by their co-operation in seeing that no wilful persons harm or disturb the birds in the vicinity, they can make the reserve an unique success as "Calgary's own bird sanctuary."

ILD BIRDS WILL FIND SANCTUARY

W. J. Selby Walker



Below is a map of the estate, which is within the city limits near the end of Ninth avenue southeast. It is well wooded, ideally situated on the banks of the Bow and with ever-running spring water. Dams will be built where marked on the illustration and form backwaters and pools for the waterfowl. It is proposed that the smaller island shall be used as a breeding place for game birds for the Alberta Fish and Game association, while the larger isle will be a show place for city. Mr. Selby Walker also suggests that it may be utilized for a zoological garden.

The lower photos show ringneck pheasants, which are already stocked on the island.